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The SAGA of The SWAMP THING
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CAN. 95¢
U.K. 30p
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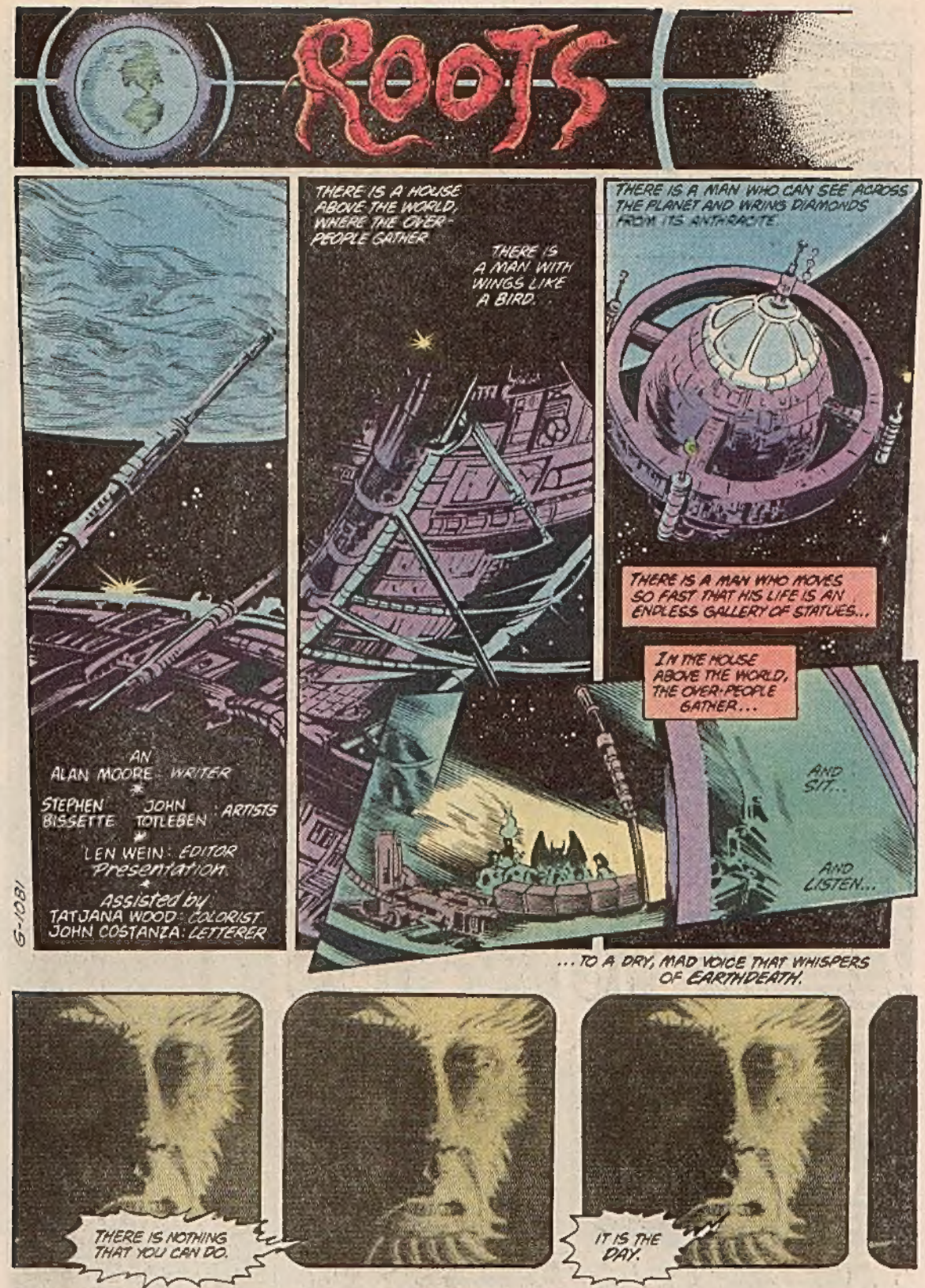
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G-1081
THERE IS A HOUSE ABOVE THE WORLD, WHERE THE OVER-PEOPLE GATHER.
THERE IS A MAN WITH WINGS LIKE A BIRD.
THERE IS A MAN WHO CAN SEE ACROSS THE PLANET AND WRINGS DIAMONDS FROM ITS ANTHRACITE.
THERE IS A MAN WHO MOVES SO FAST THAT HIS LIFE IS AN ENDLESS GALLERY OF STATUES...
IN THE HOUSE ABOVE THE WORLD, THE OVER-PEOPLE GATHER...
AND SIT...
AND LISTEN...
...TO A DRY, MAD VOICE THAT WHISPERS OF EARTHDEATH.
THERE IS NOTHING THAT YOU CAN DO.
IT IS THE DAY.

THE SAGA OF SWAMP THING 24 Published monthly by DC Comics Inc., 666 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10103. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to DC Comics Inc., Subscription Dept., PO Box 1308-F, Fort Lee, NJ 07024. Annual subscription rate $9.00. Outside USA $10.00. Copyright © 1984 DC Comics Inc. All Rights Reserved. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional. Printed in USA. Advertising Representative: Sanford Schwarz & Co., 355 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10017, (212) 391-1400.
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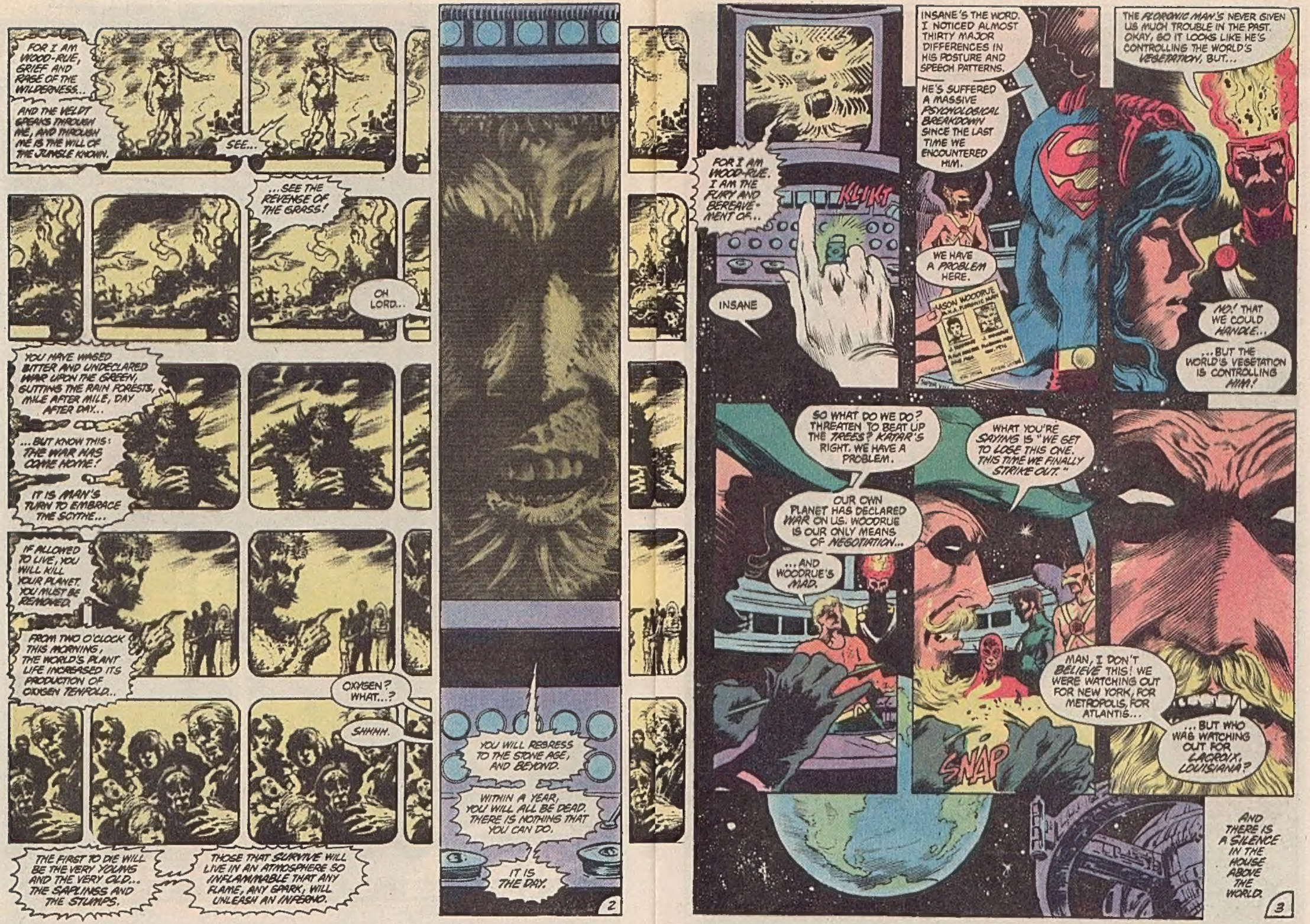

FOR I AM WOOD-RUE, GRIEF AND RAGE OF THE WILDERNESS...
AND THE VELDT SPEAKS THROUGH ME, AND THROUGH ME IS THE WILL OF THE JUNGLE KNOWN.
SEE...
...SEE THE REVENGE OF THE GRASS!
OH LORD...
YOU HAVE WAGED BITTER AND UNDECLARED WAR UPON THE GREEN, GUTTING THE RAIN FORESTS, MILE AFTER MILE, DAY AFTER DAY...
...BUT KNOW THIS: THE WAR HAS COME HOME!
IT IS MAN'S TURN TO EMBRACE THE SCYTHE...
IF ALLOWED TO LIVE, YOU WILL KILL YOUR PLANET. YOU MUST BE REMOVED.
FROM TWO O'CLOCK THIS MORNING, THE WORLD'S PLANT LIFE INCREASED ITS PRODUCTION OF OXYGEN TENFOLD...
OXYGEN? WHAT...?
SHHHH.
THE FIRST TO DIE WILL BE THE VERY YOUNG AND THE VERY OLD... THE SAPLINGS AND THE STUMPS.
THOSE THAT SURVIVE WILL LIVE IN AN ATMOSPHERE SO INFLAMMABLE THAT ANY FLAME, ANY SPARK, WILL UNLEASH AN INFERNO.
YOU WILL REGRESS TO THE STONE AGE, AND BEYOND.
WITHIN A YEAR, YOU WILL ALL BE DEAD. THERE IS NOTHING THAT YOU CAN DO.
IT IS THE DAY.
2
FOR I AM WOOD-RUE. I AM THE FURY AND BEREAVEMENT OF...
KLIK!
INSANE
INSANE'S THE WORD. I NOTICED ALMOST THIRTY MAJOR DIFFERENCES IN HIS POSTURE AND SPEECH PATTERNS.
HE'S SUFFERED A MASSIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL BREAKDOWN SINCE THE LAST TIME WE ENCOUNTERED HIM.
WE HAVE A PROBLEM HERE.
JASON WOODRUE, A.K.A. FLORONIC MAN
THE FLORONIC MAN'S NEVER GIVEN US MUCH TROUBLE IN THE PAST. OKAY, SO IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S CONTROLLING THE WORLD'S VEGETATION, BUT...
NO! THAT WE COULD HANDLE...
...BUT THE WORLD'S VEGETATION IS CONTROLLING HIM!
SO WHAT DO WE DO? THREATEN TO BEAT UP THE TREES? KATAR'S RIGHT. WE HAVE A PROBLEM.
OUR OWN PLANET HAS DECLARED WAR ON US. WOODRUE IS OUR ONLY MEANS OF NEGOTIATION...
...AND WOODRUE'S MAD.
WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS "WE GET TO LOSE THIS ONE. THIS TIME WE FINALLY STRIKE OUT."
SNAP
MAN, I DON'T BELIEVE THIS! WE WERE WATCHING OUT FOR NEW YORK, FOR METROPOLIS, FOR ATLANTIS...
...BUT WHO WAS WATCHING OUT FOR LACROIX, LOUISIANA?
AND THERE IS A SILENCE IN THE HOUSE ABOVE THE WORLD.
3

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

THE SWAMP MAN?
HOLLAND? BUT...
YOU WERE ROOTED! YOU HAD GONE ON...
...GONE ON TO YOUR REWARD, GONE ON TO THE MEADOWS OF OBLIVION, AND PEACE, AND...
WHY DID YOU RETURN? WHY DID YOU RETURN FROM THAT? UNLESS...
...UNLESS YOU SENSED MY TRIUMPH! YES, YES, YOU KNEW... KNEW OF MY ASCENSION...
...AND YOU WISHED TO SHARE IT, THIS MOMENT, THIS GLORIOUS INSTANT, BECAUSE... BECAUSE YOU ARE LIKE ME!
LIKE ME.
IT WAS YOU, YOUR FIBERS THAT PROVIDED MY LINK WITH THE GREEN, MY STAIRWAY TO THIS EMERALD THRONE. YOU...
YOU ARE THE OPENER OF THE WAY!
WOOD-RUE WELCOMES YOU TO SHARE HIS HARVEST!
PERHAPS THIS ONE FIRST...
SHE IS MY GIFT, HER LIFE AN OFFERING TO MY BROTHER, MY MENTOR, YOU, THE SWAMP GOD...
HER LIFE.
TAKE IT.
5

SPAK
SKLUTCH!!
TRAITOR.

GGGGGRRRRREEEKKRRRRRIIPPK
THEY'RE FIGHTING EACH OTHER! SANDY, GET THE KIDS OUT OF HERE...
RUN! STOP CRYIN' AND RUN!
ALEC?
PLEASE, WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE...?
WOODRUE? THAT'S WOODRUE? BUT... THE WAY HE LOOKS...
YEAH, UGLIER THAN DEATH BACKIN' OUTTA THE OUTHOUSE READIN' MAD MAGAZINE AND CRAZY AS A FOOTBALL BAT.
I AIN'T RUNNIN'! DAMNED IF I'M RUNNIN'...
I LIVED HERE ALL MY LIFE. GOT ROOTS HERE. I AIN'T RUNNIN'!
GONNA FETCH MY OLD EVANGELINE, YOU'LL SEE. GONNA GO GET HER NOW...
MISS, I'M DAMNED TO HELL IF I KNOW...
FIRST THIS WOOD-RUE GUY, THEN THIS MUDMAN, NOW EVERYBODY'S RUNNING...
... AND THEN I'M GONNA BE RIGHT BACK!
EVANGELINE? WHO'S...
7

...EVANGELINE?

WOODRUE...

LET ME... UP...

YOU ARE... AFRAID... TO FIGHT... AS A *MAN* FIGHTS...

I'M NOT A MAN.

NEITHER ARE *YOU.* IN FACT...

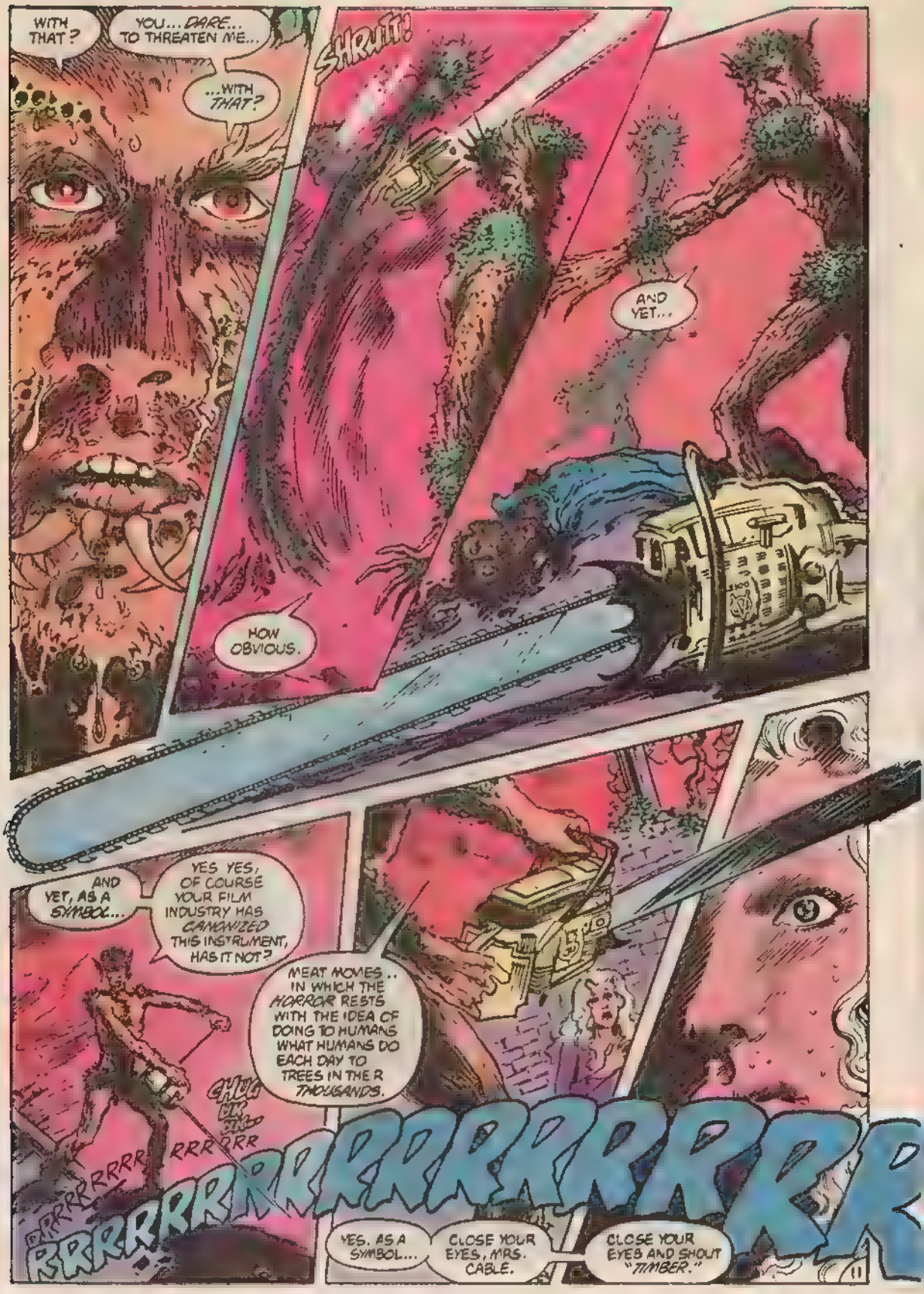
...YOU'RE NOT *ANYTHING.*

"*THEN, THERE'S NO HOPE AT ALL.*"

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING.

THERE'S ALWAYS HOPE.
HAL, COULD YOU CONTACT OA? SOME OF THE CORPS ARE VEGETABLE LIFE FORMS...
ALIEN VEGETABLES. THEY'D HAVE THE SAME COMMUNICATION PROBLEM THAT WE HAVE. MAYBE MORE SO.
HMMM. WHAT ABOUT THE UNDERSEA SITUATION?
NOT AS SERIOUS YET AS ON LAND, BUT IT'S GETTING WORSE.
LISTEN, WAIT A MINUTE...
THE PROBLEM'S WITH THE OXYGEN BALANCE, RIGHT? SO WHY DON'T I...
... USE YOUR ATOMIC RESTRUCTURING ABILITIES TO CONVERT OXYGEN MOLECULES INTO CARBON DIOXIDE AND RESTORE THE BALANCE?
YES, I'D THOUGHT OF THAT. IT WOULDN'T WORK.
FOR ONE THING, DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY MOLECULES MAKE UP EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE? IF YOU WANTED, I COULD COUNT THEM...
UH, YEAH, WELL, DON'T BOTHER...
WHAT ABOUT THAT CHICK IN THE TITANS? BLACKBIRD! SHE'S AN EMPATH...
RAVEN, SHE'S ALREADY TRIED. THE MASS PLANT-MIND IS TOO ALIEN. SHE CAN REACH IT, BUT SHE CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT.
THIS IS RIDICULOUS. EVER SINCE WE FIRST ENCOUNTERED WOODRUE, HE'S LOST EVERY BATTLE HE'S EVER FOUGHT.
EVERY BATTLE, PERHAPS.
BUT THIS IS WAR...

"...AND THE OTHER SIDE ISN'T TAKING PRISONERS."
MRS. CABLE...
I REMEMBER YOU, IN THE SWAMP... YOU CAME TO VISIT THE TRAITOR WHEN HE WAS ROOTED IN THE SWAMP...
I REMEMBER.
WOODRUE? WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU? YOU WERE HUMAN...
NO! NEVER HUMAN!!
ALWAYS HAVE I BEEN, WOOD-RUE!
ALWAYS!
WOOD-RUE, GREEN MESSIAH... WOOD-RUE, ANNIHILATING ANGEL OF THE THORNS...
MISTER, I DON'T KNOW FROM ANNIHILATIN' ANGELS, BUT I SURE KNOW A CANDY-BUTT WHEN I SEE ONE.
TURN AROUND...
...I WANTCHA T'MEET EVANSELINE.
RRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR!
10


WITH THAT?
YOU... DARE... TO THREATEN ME...
...WITH THAT?
SHRIIT!
AND YET...
HOW OBVIOUS.
AND YET, AS A SYMBOL...
YES YES, OF COURSE YOUR FILM INDUSTRY HAS CANONIZED THIS INSTRUMENT, HAS IT NOT?
MEAT MOVES .. IN WHICH THE HORROR RESTS WITH THE IDEA OF DOING TO HUMANS WHAT HUMANS DO EACH DAY TO TREES IN THE R THOUSANDS.
CHUG CHUG CHUG
RRRR

OH, OH, MY ARM. IT'S... YOU'VE...
HHAHUHH
OH, IT HURTS...
GGGGHOOK
OHHHGH!
SKRRRRRRRRR-
NAOO
-KA-CHOK!
WHY DO YOU KEEP COMING BACK?
WUH-WHY?!
WHY DO YOU KEEP COMING BACK AND HURTING ME?
BECAUSE... YOU...
...ARE HURTING...
...THE GREEN.
ME?
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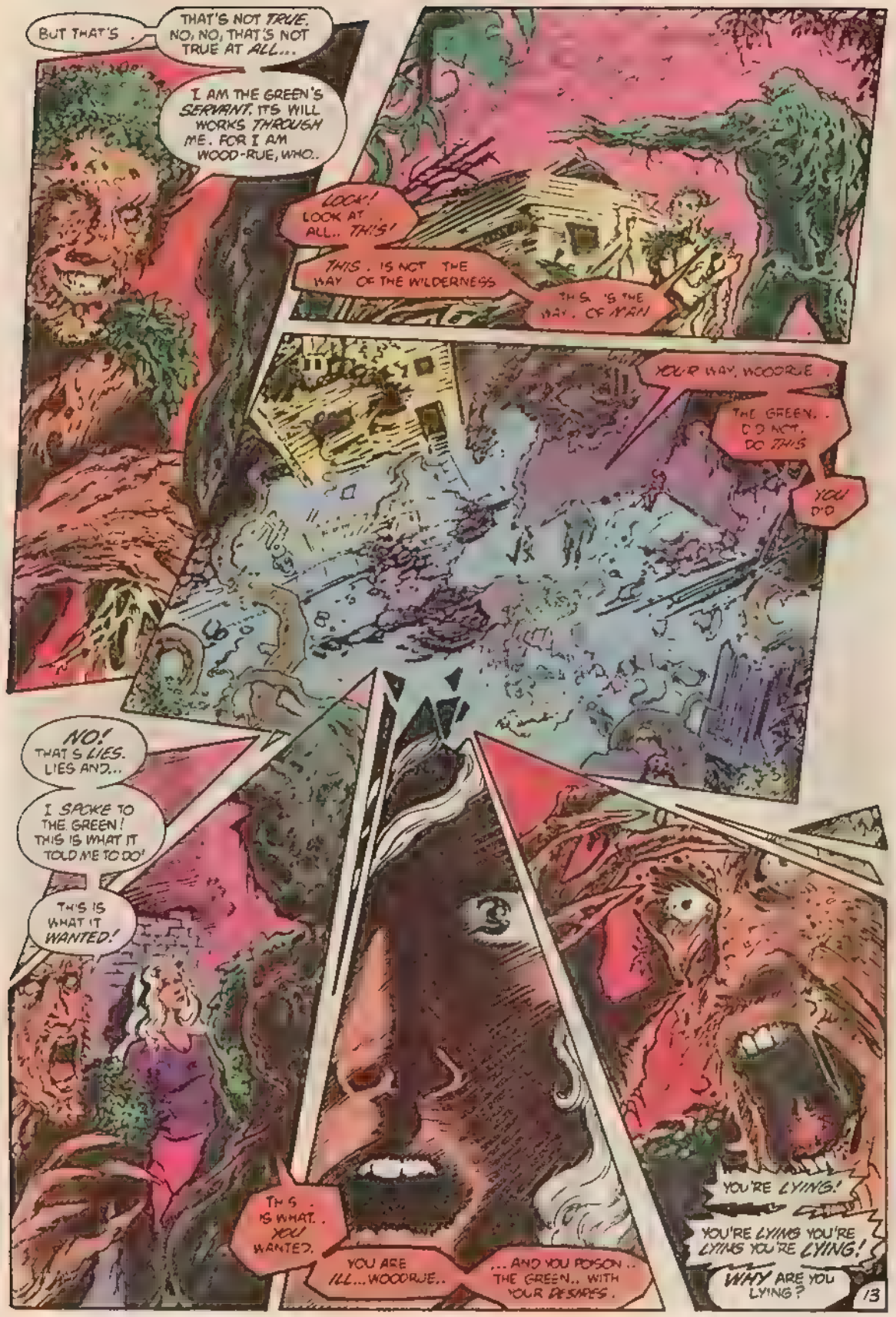
BUT THAT'S .
THAT'S NOT TRUE. NO, NO, THAT'S NOT TRUE AT ALL...
I AM THE GREEN'S SERVANT. ITS WILL WORKS THROUGH ME. FOR I AM WOOD-RUE, WHO..
LOOK! LOOK AT ALL.. THIS!
THIS . IS NOT THE WAY OF THE WILDERNESS
THIS 'S THE WAY . OF MAN
YOUR WAY, WOODRUE
THE GREEN. . DO NOT, DO THIS
YOU DO
NO! THAT'S LIES. LIES AND..
I SPOKE TO THE GREEN! THIS IS WHAT IT TOLD ME TO DO!
THIS IS WHAT IT WANTED!
THIS . IS WHAT. . YOU WANTED.
YOU ARE ILL...WOODRUE..
... AND YOU POISON .. THE GREEN.. WITH YOUR DESIRES .
YOU'RE LYING!
YOU'RE LYING YOU'RE LYING YOU'RE LYING!
WHY ARE YOU LYING?
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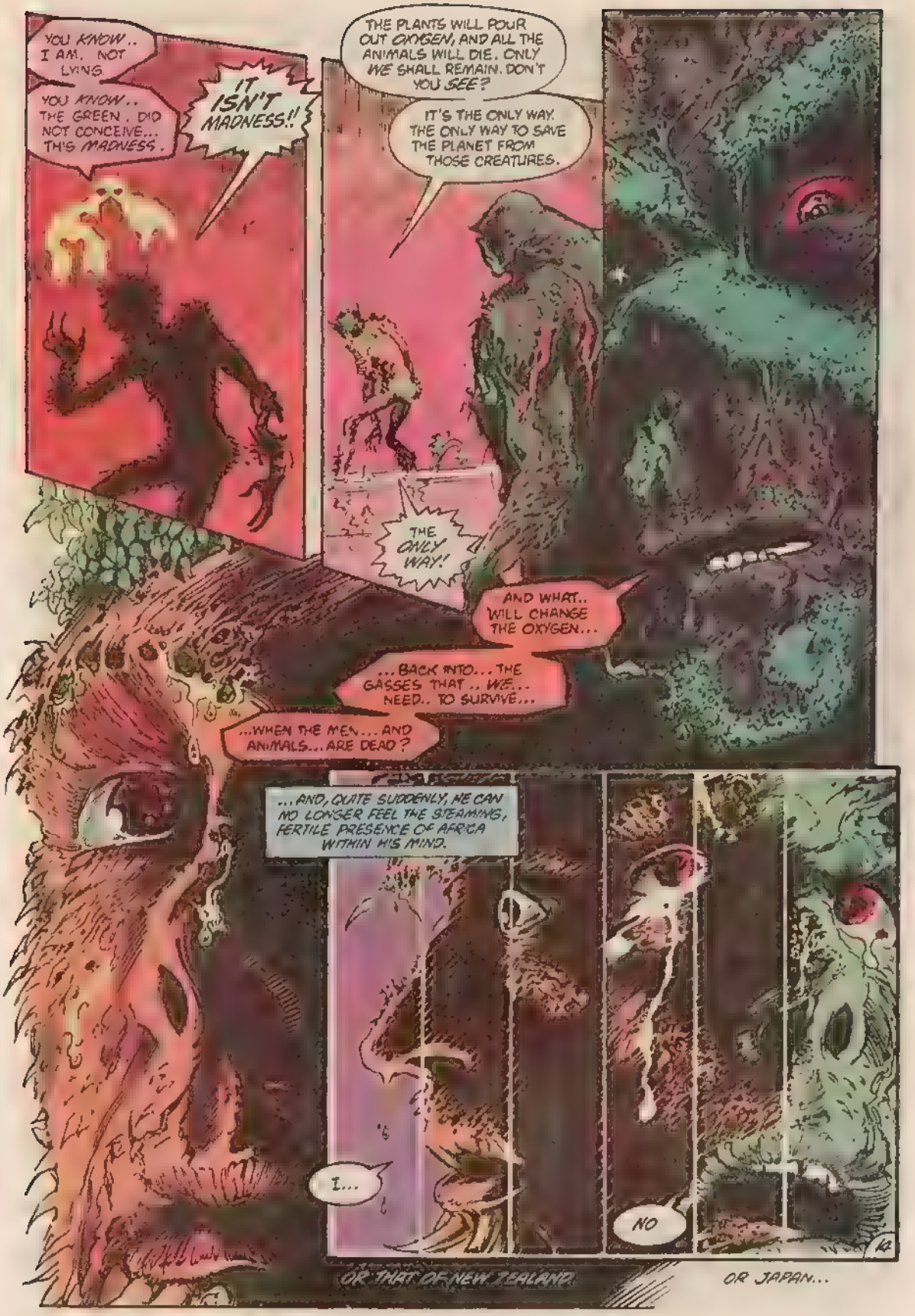

YOU KNOW.. I AM. NOT LYING.
YOU KNOW.. THE GREEN. DID NOT CONCEIVE... THIS MADNESS.
IT ISN'T MADNESS!!
THE PLANTS WILL POUR OUT OXYGEN, AND ALL THE ANIMALS WILL DIE. ONLY WE SHALL REMAIN. DON'T YOU SEE?
IT'S THE ONLY WAY. THE ONLY WAY TO SAVE THE PLANET FROM THOSE CREATURES.
THE ONLY WAY!
AND WHAT.. WILL CHANGE THE OXYGEN...
...BACK INTO... THE GASSES THAT.. WE... NEED.. TO SURVIVE...
...WHEN THE MEN... AND ANIMALS... ARE DEAD?
...AND, QUITE SUDDENLY, HE CAN NO LONGER FEEL THE STEAMING, FERTILE PRESENCE OF AFRICA WITHIN HIS MIND.
I...
NO
OR THAT OF NEW ZEALAND
OR JAPAN...
42

OR WYOMING.

OR CAROLINA.

NNOOOOOOOOO!

DON'T *LEAVE* ME!

I'M YOUR *FRIEND*. I'M *WOOD-RUE!*

PLEASE... YOU *KNOW* ME!

PLEASE... IT'S ALL *SHRINKING*. IT'S *GOING AWAY*...

I CAN'T FEEL THE *TREES* ANYMORE

AND THE *GRASS*... WHERE IS THE *GRASS* GOING?

GRAY SO GRAY AND DEAD AND...

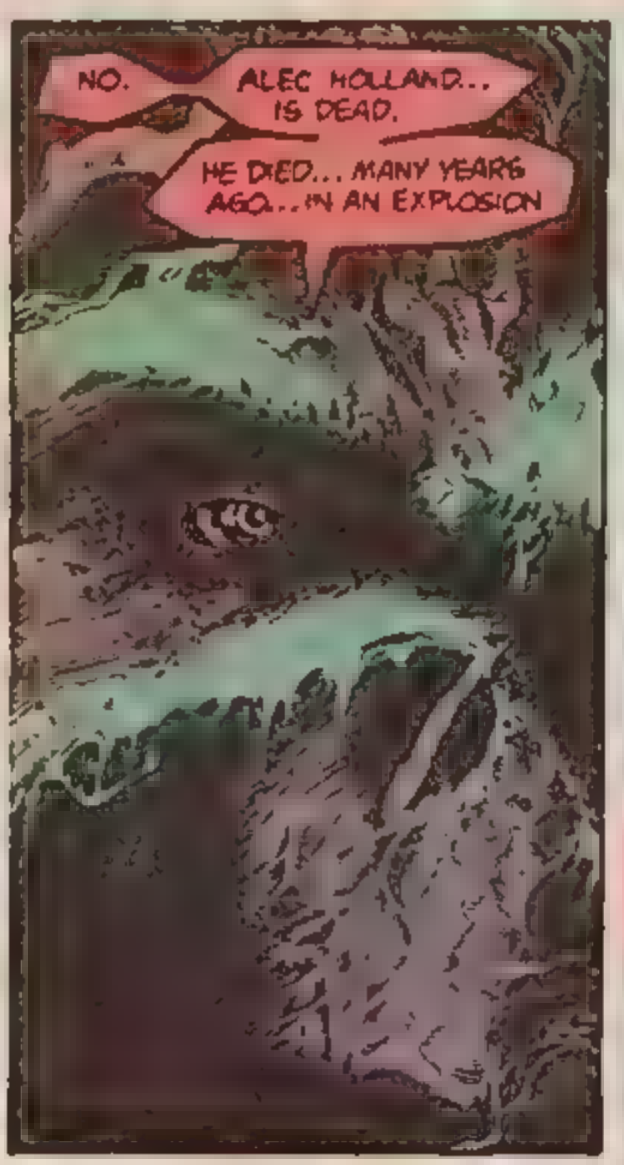
YOU! *YOU* MUST STAY WITH ME...

JUST YOU. THAT'S ALL I WANT...

PLEASE, DON'T GO. IT'S *LONELY*. THERE'S A HOLE IN MY HEAD AS BIG AS THE WORLD AND *IT'S SO VERY LONELY*...

PLEASE STAY. PLEASE..

AAAAOOOOOOAAAAA
AAAAA



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YOU'RE ,, HAPPY?

YES

I'M SORRY, I..

WHERE WILL YOU GO TO?

WHERE I ALWAYS .. GO.

BACK.. HOME.

BACK TO .. THE SWAMP

ALWAYS...
ALWAYS THE SWAMP.
I AM RUNNING.
RUNNING THROUGH THE DEAD, GRAY TREES..
I AM RUNNING THROUGH A CROWD, AND NONE OF THEM WILL SPEAK TO ME I AM NOT WORTHY
NOT A PLANT
A MAN
I AM A MAN JASON WOODRUE DOCTOR JASON WOODRUE JASON CALL ME JASON
BUT HOW WILL THEY KNOW? HOW WILL THEY KNOW I AM A MAN UNLESS I HOWL A MAN'S SCREAM
AAAHH.
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SOON THEY WILL COME. I FEEL THEM CLOSING IN. I MUST HURRY...
THEY WILL COME FROM THE SKY...
THEY ALWAYS COME FROM THE SKY...
MY BARK HAS GROWN SINCE I LAST WORE JASON'S FLESH. I SHOULD TRIM IT, CUT IT BACK...
NO. NO TIME
IT DOESN'T MATTER. THEY WON'T SUSPECT.
THIS CANISTER... SO DIFFICULT TO WORK...
THERE.
NOW THE CLOTHES... THE JACKET. MY ARM HURTS..
THERE ALL DONE
I'M READY
WOODRUE?
WOODRUE? I.. WELL, YES, BUT...
CALL ME JASON. I'M ONE OF YOU. I'M HUMAN.
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HUMAN LIKE YOU.
GOD...
WOODRUE? WOODRUE, WHAT...
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?
WRONG? WITH ME?
OH... YOU MEAN MY ARM! WELL, I BROKE IT. AN ACCIDENT. I WAS JUST, YOU KNOW, DOING SOMETHING NORMAL, DRIVING A CAR, FISHING, ONE OF THOSE THINGS US MEN DO..
...AND I BROKE IT.
IT HURTS. ACTUALLY, IT HURTS QUITE A LOT. I NEED A DOCTOR..
WHAT AM I SAYING? I AM A DOCTOR! HAHAHAHA...
WOODRUE... IT'S OKAY. WE'LL FIND YOU A DOCTOR.
ARKHAM?
I GUESS SO...
KAL?
WHAT HAPPENED OUT HERE?
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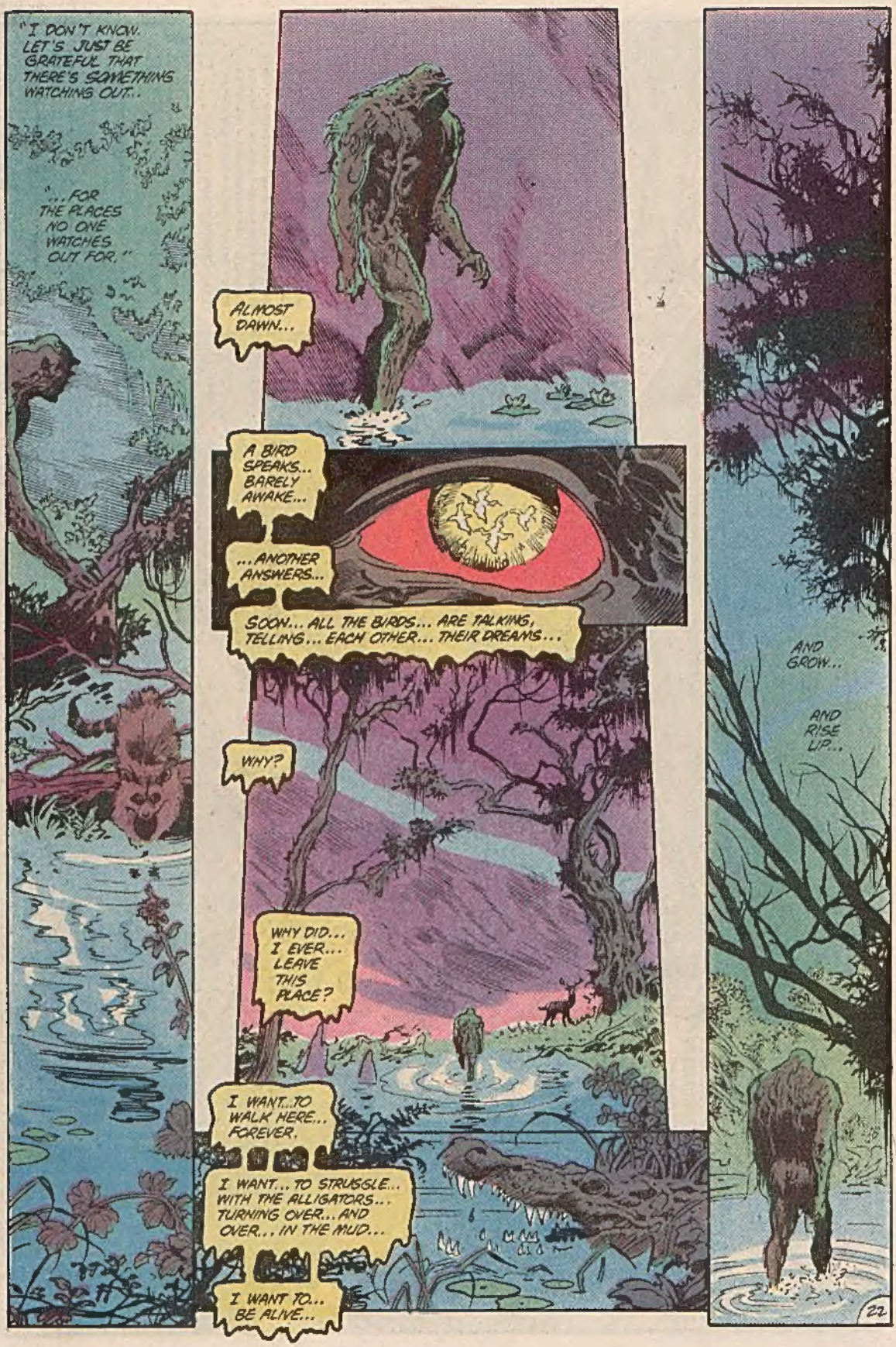
"I DON'T KNOW. LET'S JUST BE GRATEFUL THAT THERE'S SOMETHING WATCHING OUT...
"...FOR THE PLACES NO ONE WATCHES OUT FOR."
ALMOST DAWN...
A BIRD SPEAKS... BARELY AWAKE...
...ANOTHER ANSWERS...
SOON... ALL THE BIRDS... ARE TALKING, TELLING... EACH OTHER... THEIR DREAMS...
WHY?
WHY DID... I EVER... LEAVE THIS PLACE?
I WANT...TO WALK HERE... FOREVER.
I WANT... TO STRUGGLE... WITH THE ALLIGATORS... TURNING OVER... AND OVER... IN THE MUD...
I WANT TO... BE ALIVE...
AND GROW...
AND RISE UP...
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..AND
MEET
THE SUN.
next: The Sleep of Reason...
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New York, NY 10103

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SWAMP THINGS

HERE'S A SNEAK PREVIEW OF NEXT ISSUE'S COVER--THE FINISHED ART OF STEVE BISSETTE AND JOHN TOTLEBEN!